

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
MINUTES
November 6, 2007

On Tuesday, November 6, 2007, the Edgefield County Council held its regular monthly meeting. The meeting was held at 6:00 P. M. in the County Council Chambers, 225 Jeter Street, Edgefield.

Members present

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman
Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman
Norman Dorn, Councilman
Joel D. Hudson, Councilman
B. Everette Kitchens, Councilman

Others present

John W. Pettigrew, Jr., County Administrator
John F. Byrd, Jr., County Attorney
Lynn W. Strom, Finance/Budget Manager
Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council
and others as per list attached

Chairman Kneece called the meeting to order and the invocation was given by Councilman Hudson. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Minutes

The motion to approve the minutes of the October 2, 2007 Edgefield County Council, as presented, was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Hudson. Motion carried unanimously.

Reports

No comments.

Executive Session

At this time Chairman Kneece asked for a motion for council to convene in executive session pursuant to Code Section 30-4-70 (a) (5) of the SC Code of Laws 1976, as amended, concerning a proposed industry, and returning to regular session at the discretion of the Chairman.

Motion was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Hudson. The motion carried unanimously.

Returning to regular session, the Chairman stated they would proceed with the regular meeting. The executive session concerned an economic development project.

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Ordinances

First reading of Ordinance No. 07-08-593, "An Ordinance Enacting and Adopting a Supplement to the Code of Ordinances for Edgefield County, South Carolina", was approved by a motion made by Councilman Hudson, seconded by Councilman Kitchens. Motion carried unanimously.

First reading of Ordinance No. 07-08-594, "An Ordinance Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of a Fee Agreement By and Between Edgefield County, SC and Project Tee Providing for a Payment of a Fee in Lieu of Taxes" was approved by a motion made by Councilman Kitchens, seconded by Councilman Bright. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution

Consideration of Resolution No. 07-08-303, "An Inducement Resolution Providing for a Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement Between Edgefield County and Project Tee." Motion was made by Councilman Kitchens, seconded by Councilman Hudson, to approve Resolution No. 07-08-303. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Annual Audit Report

Ms. Laurie Smith, CPA (Elliott Davis, LLP), presented the annual external audit for year ending June 30, 2007 (FY 2006-07). She briefly highlighted some of the significant numbers and changes and some new standards that will impact the county within the next year.

Ms. Smith stated that there is an unqualified opinion on the financial statements, which is a clean opinion on the fair presentation as of June 30, 2007 (end of fiscal year) and for that year ended on governmental funds, business type activities, major funds by definition and the aggregate remaining funds of the County of Edgefield. This is a very lengthy document and the format is very consistent with last year's new reporting model.

There is a new governmental county standard board issued statements 43 and 45 which will apply to the county for the year ending June 30, 2009. This will have a major impact on some of the fund balances, whereas right now, you are, by governmental accounting standards and general acceptable accounting principles, required only to expense the benefits that you offer your employees that are retired, that benefit being primarily medical insurance from retirement date if they fit in your policy to the age of 65. That medical insurance coverage that you offer the retiree is expense right now after they retire as you pay it on a monthly basis. This new standard is going to require you to have an actuarial study done and try to come up with a number of all employees who will be retiring and who will get that benefit and for the county to actual expense or fund that liability as that employee is currently working with the county instead of after they retire.

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Ms. Smith stated that they have actually seen some impact on some studies that have already been done with some Phase I governments who are required to apply this standard a year ahead of Edgefield County. These numbers are big, so I feel this could dramatically effect what council is seeing on fund balance. So, when I said that you were at four months earlier, this could easily take you down to three months of operation when we have to apply this standard. We will get some actuarial numbers done and you will probably be hearing around March of 2008 so we will know where we are well before implementation.

Motion was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Hudson, to accept this report as information. Motion carried unanimously.

Emergency Services Transmitter Sites

Mike Casey, Emergency Preparedness Director, gave a follow-up report on emergency services for transmitter sites (North and South Towers). All emergency services in Edgefield County operate from these towers. Mr. Casey appeared before council in October to report to them on the conditions of these towers and the chairman and council asked him to come back in November with specifics.

There were several things found that desperately need immediate attention, especially at the North tower; one being to replace the fire repeater with a new one that meets all of the government specifications as they are written now.

The second is that while the repeater is being replaced, Mike stated that his recommendation would be to enter into a service contract with one of the two-way companies in the area to service the fire/ambulance service repeaters.

The third thing that Mike said he found rather disturbing is that the transmitter building at each of these sites is very inadequate. They house the equipment, they keep the equipment dry and that is it. There is no consideration for keeping the building temperature controlled with ventilation and/or air conditioning. There is no insulation in the buildings and the roofs are in fair condition. Those buildings need to have the structural integrity to withstand winds, hail (mother nature). Also, guy wires are in terrible condition on the North tower particularly.

His suggestion/recommendation was for the county to enter into some type of repair and/or replace program. As one company has stated, "the county is in a critical situation with the North tower. If it comes down, better than 50% of communication coverage will be lost. Two tower companies have been contacted to come in and see what would be involved to repair this tower.

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To replace the North repeater (fire), it would be roughly \$10,000. The brand new repeater would have a one year warranty and the existing repeater would need some repairing and it could be used as a back-up for either tower. A service contract for fire and EMS repeaters, once some repairing is done, would be approximately \$400-\$500 a year – that would include a yearly inspection.

A service contract for the North & South tower repeaters for the generators (maybe \$500 per year); tower legs may be a little more expensive because more labor is involved (pour concrete, new rod in the ground, etc.) tower will have to be re-plumbed and re-tension the guy wire once this work is done.

Mike informed council members that he would know more of a price after he meets with some “tower” contractors later in the week. The building situation can be put on hold for a while, if he could be guaranteed a ball park figure on the other repairs.

Councilman Kitchens made a motion that Mike get three estimates and he work with the administrator to give a maximum that can be spent and they can go ahead and use the lowest estimate seconded by Councilman Hudson. Motion carried unanimously. This is for the repair of the tower.

Motion was made by Councilman Kitchens to go with the maximum of \$10,000 for the repeater plus \$1,000 for the service contract. The motion was seconded by Councilman Hudson. Motion carried unanimously.

Mike informed council that the disaster trailer is completed and if there is a major disaster it has the capability (well equipped) to treat approximately fifty people. It is available for our county and a support trailer for any other county.

Comprehensive Plan Meetings

Guy Mueller, Zoning Administrator, addressed council concerning the comprehensive plan, which is nearing the ten year expiration. The Planning Commission would like to have as much input from Edgefield County citizens as possible so they are asking the council to allow the Planning Commission to hold its regular meetings in each council district, beginning in December. It would put the meetings closer to the people of each district. Guy stated that no location of any of the meetings had been discussed – really need that from councilmen. Again, maybe council would rather conduct the meetings from the council chambers. The meetings will be advertised with a telephone number citizens can call for more information of what this involves. He will begin with District 1.

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Veterans Affairs

John Rikard, County Veterans Affairs Officer, thanked the administrator and his staff for all of the help his office received involving the loss of his office to the fire. They are now located in the Ag Building on Gray Street.

He gave a report on benefits: fifteen million dollars that have been administered to veterans' families and approximately five million in hospitalization benefits for veterans that have come through the local office for both this county and adjoining counties that Mr. Rikard and his office help.

This year the SC Association of Counties Veterans' Affairs Officers will host the National Training Conference in Charleston June 15-20, 2008. Approximately 400-500 people will be attending. Mr. Rikard stated that \$30,000 has to be raised to be able to host the conference. We are asking for donations from the counties and also selling some advertisements which will promote South Carolina. Some counties have donated \$1,000.00. The \$30,000 will help to provide everything that goes into hosting something of this magnitude, including the individuals conducting the training classes.

Chairman Kneece made a motion, seconded by Councilman Bright, to receive this request as information and bring back to council on December 4th. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Rikard will obtain some further information for council.

Flu Shots

The administrator stated that several county employees had approached him concerning the possibility of the county providing flu shots for the employees, knowing some organizations do this. They feel since they come in contact with the public, handling money, and paperwork, this would be good. The Health Department will administer the shots for \$25.00 per shot and the EMS can obtain the vaccine and administer the shots for the cost of \$15.25 per shot. There are approximately 130 employees eligible for this, knowing some employees probably will not take the shot. One of the insurance plans, not the standard plan, does cover the flu shot but only fourteen (14) employees have that plan. If one hundred (100) employees did opt to take the shot that would be a total of \$1,525.00.

The chairman's opinion on this request was that he did not want to get into any re-occurring debt for council. There are plenty of places individuals could obtain flu shots. Chairman Kneece made the motion not to approve this request. After some discussion from the audience, Mr. Kneece withdrew his motion.

Councilman Hudson made the motion to approve EMS administering the shots at a cost of \$15.25 to each employee. The motion was seconded by Councilman Kitchens and the

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motion carried unanimously.

Plaque / Council Chambers

The chairman explained this is an item that has been discussed for several years and is being brought back before council at this time. The administrator has received the price of \$1,500.00 for a bronze plaque, installed, for the council chambers. Motion made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Kitchens, to approve the \$1,500.00 for the plaque for the council chambers. Motion carried unanimously.

Condition of Concession Trailer

Councilman Dorn asked that this item be placed on the agenda concerning the condition of the concession trailer when it was returned to Bettis Park. The Heritage Jubilee used the Edgefield County concession trailer in October during its festival. Mr. Joel Jolly, Chairman of the jubilee festival appeared before council in September to request the use of the trailer, stating that it would be returned in the same condition as when it was obtained.

Mr. Dorn referred to pictures that were taken before the trailer was removed and when it was returned. His main concern was "is there a cost involved?" The administrator stated that the pictures taken on the return of the trailer showed "A little bit of dirt on the floor, a little food in the sink (small particles) and there were a couple of scratches on the freezers where they had shifted during the transport. Originally there was some concern that the freezer was not maintaining the proper temperature but it did return to the correct temperature and Nick Wates our recreation director, and Ms. Barley, cleaned the trailer and of course it is back in satisfactory condition."

Mr. Dorn asked shouldn't there be some type of rules to go by when someone wants to borrow the trailer? The administrator stated there were rules written, but during the moving of the trailer from the town to Bettis Park there was some shifting that caused most of the problems. The freezers were not anchored down. Councilman Bright spoke up and said that he believed that the rules stated that whoever moves the trailer is suppose to have it inspected and that did not happen, and according to Mr. Bright the freezer has not been repaired (administrator said they could look into that).

Joel Jolly asked to speak. "I did send a refrigeration repairman to check the freezer and when he got there he called and told me the freezer was negative 10. Mr. Wates was there also and he agreed with me. That is the last discussion I have had about the freezer. I heard through channels about these concerns and I drafted a letter addressing, I thought, most of the issues. Maybe a check list on the wall would help out. I am not trying to make excuses, I will do whatever I need to do, but you all will have to remember that after working about two months on this festival and three endless nights, you just aren't very sharp. As far as the freezer and refrigerator shifting, it did because I forgot to anchor

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it. Whatever I need to do I will do and I have told Mr. Pettigrew that. We did track some dirt in on the floor and I would have been happy to have come out if I had been contacted. It is easy to talk about it but all you would have had to do was call. If I had been contacted I would have been right there. If there are any other concerns I will be glad to address them right now.”

The chairman said he felt the only concern was the freezer. Mr. Jolly said he would be glad to have the repairman go back (\$125). The agreement was for Mr. Bright go with Nick to check the freezer again.

Councilman Dorn asked to speak on another item (magistrate office hours).. He asked Mr. Byrd to read Number 10 of correspondence from the court administration. Mr. Dorn said he already has the answer but he wanted the county attorney’s opinion. Mr. Byrd read Number 10: “Designate the hours of operation for each magistrate’s court’s office in the county and designate the hours during which each magistrate shall be present in the office based on the number of hours fixed for each magistrate by the county governing body.”

Councilman Dorn stated that after the last meeting he had called the Supreme Court in Columbia concerning the magistrate’s office closing for lunch. After his call, that office will stay open at lunch like the other county offices.

Administrator’s Report

Our recreation program is going good. We are in football playoffs this week and next week a new format of Edgefield County teams versus North Augusta teams will be taking place in North Augusta. Next year it will be held in Edgefield. Mr. Wates stated there is a lot of interest in this and feels it will be good for Edgefield’s program.

Next week the Association of Counties is sponsoring a telecast on affordable housing and how we can provide more affordable housing in our communities. If any members of council are interested in viewing this that will be held next Thursday morning from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon.

Tomorrow, Mr. Johnny Anderson who runs the county airport in Trenton has some folks coming from the aeronautics commission and they will be discussing some possible grants to help upgrade the airport. I will report back to council if there is anything promising.

Guests

Mr. Rodney Ashcraft addressed council concerning the Vision 20-20 meetings. He was part of the economic committee side of the meetings. He thanked the council members that were in attendance at the Vision 20-20 meetings.

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Mr. Ashcraft shared some of the things discussed: road-widening of highway 25 in some areas; water & sewer-expanding north and west of Edgefield, and developing an entertainment venue. It was suggested that the council work with the committee to move all three of these items forward.

Comments from the public

The chairman recognized Boy Scouts that were in attendance.

Ms. Garrett stated she is a retired nurse having worked with a government agency. She expressed her views in support of the county offering flu shots to the employees.

Claims Approved

PAYROLL:	10/24/07 thru 10/7/07	
Regular.....		\$211,409.25

PAYROLL:	10/8/07 thru 10/21/07	
Regular.....		\$216,539.04

General Operating.....	\$964,888.10
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There being no further business, Councilman Dorn made the motion to adjourn. The next regular meeting of council will be held at 6:00 P.M. Tuesday, December 4th.

ATTEST

Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman

Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman

Norman Dorn, Councilman

Joel D. Hudson, Councilman

B. Everette Kitchens, Councilman